



EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

LAKSHMISWAR SINHA



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EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

A Collection of Essays

by

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Dedicated to The Memory of my brother
Kshitishwar Sinha who laid down
his life for the cause.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Educational value of manual training in human culture	13
3 Sloyd in the sphere of education	22
4 Some practical aspects of mass education and vocational training	33
5 Importance of cardboard, wood and metal work in education	48
6 Conclusion	55

INTRODUCTION

Published in this booklet are a few selected articles of mine on some vital aspects of education in India. These essays had appeared in different Indian monthlies at different times covering a period of more than a quarter of a century. My original intention in collecting and publishing these articles, was to study critically my own ideas under the changing conditions of the country's educational system. Incidentally, they may also serve to focus attention on certain educational problems which still invite challenge. Before, however, we pass on to the articles proper, it may be necessary to explain the background and the situation of life that prompted me to write them.

The first article was published in *Welfare* in 1926, when I was ploughing a lonely furrow. The person who inspired me to think and work thus in an independent manner was my father. He made me, while I was yet a young boy to work with him in his experiments with gardening and agriculture. I was assigned the work of looking after his nursery, orchard and vegetable gardens.

INTRODUCTION

I had also to take care of his cows. I was hardly twelve when he selected me as his assistant. Not only would I help with practical work, I had also to copy out daily his field observation notes which he was collecting then for publication.*

Although agriculture and cow-keeping were his first love, my father was also actively interested in village-industries. A good number of craftsmen — carpenters, cane and bamboo-workers, weavers etc. — used to work under his guidance. He was himself a master-craftsman. In short, our home pulsed with all sorts of activities. I took special interest in the carpenter's job and was allowed to handle tools. Once, when a big eight-roofed building (24' × 60') — a community hall, was under construction, I apprenticed myself to the chief carpenter. Father encouraged me and praised my effort. I was not quite conscious at that time how imperceptively and gradually he had started guiding the future course of my life.

• My father took particular care of my extra-curricular studies. He would select books for me.

* কৃষিপ্রবন্ধ (Essays on Agriculture), গোপালন শিক্ষা (Lessons in Cow-Keeping), অমূল্য ফলের চাষ (Profitable Horticulture) are among the more important books written by my father, Banerwar Sinha (Born 1274 B. S.). He has written besides a good number of pamphlets on agriculture and other topics.

INTRODUCTION

Besides the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, I had to read aloud to him such works as the life of Ramtanu Lahiri, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's autobiography, writings of Rabindranath and the like. Unlike my elders, I was allowed the freedom not to go to a traditional high school. I underwent schooling at a national school — a type of school that sprang up when the Swadeshi movement was sweeping over the country. To my great delight, there was plenty of craft activities, i. e. spinning, weaving, wood work, gardening etc. in the school.

After I passed my school final examination, I got myself admitted to an engineering college in Calcutta, organised under the Bengal Council of National Education. I could not somehow conform myself to the mode of life in a city. I had to leave Calcutta and also my studies in the engineering line. Thus I found myself at the cross-roads, when I was barely seventeen. That was the time (1923) when I read about the Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan founded by Rabindranath. I came to Sriniketan and met Mr. Leonard K. Elmhirst — the first Director of the Institute. After I had looked into the courses of studies, I was convinced that the institution was meant for youngmen like me. I

INTRODUCTION

joined Sriniketan. This is the place where I found myself. There was a message in its ideal of rural service which the course of studies and actual field work sought to translate in practical terms.

I wanted to emulate in my own life, the ideal of self-help which Sriniketan held up before the villages and I was allowed by its Director to earn my livelihood by extra work in carpentry. What influenced me most was the atmosphere of joy and freedom which Elmhirst created around him. Today, I understand more deeply the meaning of that freedom which the early batches of students enjoyed at Sriniketan. It was a type of freedom that fostered sound human relationship and enkindled initiative for the fullest expression of the self in relation with the greater world outside the Institution. While it was my father who guided my first faltering steps, it was Sriniketan which gave a real direction to my life.

It was while at Sriniketan that it dawned on me that knowledge — no matter how small it is — bears special meaning in life, when it is gathered (consciously or incidentally) through experience. Then knowledge becomes much more than mere information acquired out of books. Knowledge acquired through experience in a life-

INTRODUCTION

situation is a kind of realisation. After my training at Sriniketan, I was appointed as a teacher at Santiniketan. It was there that I first experienced the thrill and joy of work with children. My book on Educational Woodwork,* was written about this time. Rabindranath very kindly contributed a preface and the encouragement that I got thereby, bears its effect on me even today. It is during this period that my first article "Educational Value of Manual Training in Human Culture" was written.

While yet a youthful teacher at Santiniketan, I felt the urge to broaden my experience and to equip myself further for the vocation of a teacher. The pedagogy of the conventional type held no attraction for me. I wanted to know whether there was a teaching method whereby mind and muscle could be brought into concerted action resulting in an experience in a real life-situation. I had already a foretaste of how the outcome of such experience could help one to earn and learn at the same time. Whether this type of activity-education could be worked out as a method or a system, became with me now a question of consuming interest. It was about this time that

* কাঠের কাজ : Published by Visva-Bharati. 1882 B. S. (1925).

INTRODUCTION

I first came to learn about Sweden and its excellent Sloyd system. I spent the period 1928 to 1930 as a student of the Nääs Institute trying to master the system of imparting knowledge and skill through educational crafts.

After securing my Diploma at the Nääs Institute, I spent about a year and half touring over the Scandinavian countries and Baltic States and studying their educational systems. My second article "Sloyd in the Sphere of Education" which contains the history of the birth of Sloyd system and a mass of facts based on first-hand observation, was written after my return to India from my first European sojourn.

There was only a gap of year and half, between my first trip to Sweden and my second. This brief interval was spent at Santiniketan, holding short courses for teachers* but mostly

* Here is an account written by a Teacher-student of the courses organized. This appears in the November, 1952 issue of the *Visva-Bharati News*.

"THE ASRAMA TAKES TO HANDICRAFTS

"Not that we did not have handicrafts before—indeed, Rabindranath has all along insisted on their being included in the Asrama activities — but lately, thanks to our friend Lakshmiswar Sinha, a new life has been put in the work of the hands.....

INTRODUCTION

planning how certain features of the Sloyd system could profitably be incorporated in our own educational system in India — planning also how Swedish co-operation in personnel and equipment could be made available for the purpose. Thus, when my second European tour came to

His idea is to take in hand first a group of adults, preferably those who are in the teaching line, and thereby to increase the number of workers who would help in the spread of his technical cult. He wrote articles, he approached persons of influence; and it would be an injustice to say that he got no appreciation or response. Many people were interested, several made inquiries and some even came forward to learn, but no one came forth with adequate proposals for the establishment of a sufficiently well-equipped training class. Partly on account of this and partly as a debt to his *alma mater*, "but chiefly because in Visva-Bharati he found sympathisers who would do their best in forwarding his plans," he came over to Santiniketan as a teacher of handicrafts in July 1932... ..

And the first two or three months L Sinha was impatient with the slowness of the response he met from the staff and the students. But today he is having so much response that he does not know now to cope with it.....And from seven in the morning to almost nine at night, one would invariably find either a class going on in full swing or individuals putting in a few voluntary extra hours

Let us examine what this heterogeneous and intensively preoccupied class is doing. Most of the time it works so quietly that one outside hardly knows that a class is going on. At intervals there is a little conversation and perhaps laughter. At other times the teacher's voice can be heard humming or

INTRODUCTION

materialize, I was already far advanced from the stage of a first flush of wonder.

My second tour to Europe saw me a maturer person — more critically observant, far more prone to sift and judge. Not blind and wholesale imitation but adaptation in the particular frame and context of our own country — was my main idea. I visited a number of countries and studied

actually breaking out into snatches of a song... .. It is work and pleasure combined and our teacher maintains discipline as well as interest.

This work with cardboard will give us the initial technique. Later, we shall go on to woodwork, leatherwork and metal work. As we proceed, we shall find greater and greater scope for variety and usefulness in the objects we produce. One has only to look into the almirah containing various articles to see how simplicity, beauty and usefulness can be achieved in little things made by the hands and in our leisure hours..... Learning to make things like these will mean saving of money, occupation for leisure hours, a means of self-expression and pleasant satisfaction which generally accompanies the creation of something, however slightly original, and last but not the least, the promotion of home industries.

L. Sinha has a clear idea of exactly how he would develop his programme in intensity as well as in extensiveness. Above all he wants to train teachers not only for Santiniketan and Sriniketan, but from all parts of India And lastly, he wants to start—in fact has already started—the teaching of such work to boys of the surrounding villages through the Siksha-Satra of Sriniketan".

INTRODUCTION

critically various types of Institutions — social, vocational and educational. It came to me with all the force of conviction that if we were to effect real improvement in the lot of our people in the villages, we would do so only through a direct approach to our actual rural problems. And that may be done by correlating education with life and by breaking down the artificial barrier between the home and the school on the one hand and the school and the society on the other. This was my own personal reaction to the European experience seen in the light of my own knowledge of the Indian villages. This provided the background for my third article — “Some Practical and Important Aspects of Mass Education and Vocational training ” To my surprise the article was commented upon in the *Harijan*.*

The idea of harmonizing learning with living, of making experience a basis of knowledge and of combining physical activity with the intellectual — found favour with the founder of the Tolstoy Farm. Therefore, when the call came from Gandhiji to me to lend a hand in implementing the so called Vidyamandir scheme at Wardha, I

* In the *Harijan* for the 18th December, 1937 appears the following note (in p. 882) by Mahadev Desai, under the title “A Useful Article” :

INTRODUCTION

welcomed the chance as the crowning adventure of my life.

The birth of Basic Education heralded a new era for me. It contained all those elements which I had come to associate with a valid system of national education for India. The revolutionary implication of an education seeking to reconstruct society on the basis of self-help and non-exploitation, appeared to me to be fraught with the noblest possibilities. I thought that with the powerful backing of Gandhiji, the system might be worked out to its logical fulfilment. In the meantime what was important was to clarify the role of educational craftwork in the New Education. While working as Superintendent of Crafts at Wardha, I read a paper at the first Basic Education Conference. This paper which incorporates some of my views on the place and possibilities of certain craft activities in education, is now reproduced as the last article of this booklet.

The Modern Review for December has a useful article on Mass Education and Vocational Training by Sjt. Lakshmiswar Sinha, the handicraft teacher in Visvabharati. He starts with a proposition which should be acceptable to all mass educationists :

“The future mass education policy ought to be, in my opinion,

INTRODUCTION

constructive, and it should be real and suitable to the peculiar needs of our soil, and should be directed towards the bridging up of the gulf that exists today between intellectual and manual labour, and of many other differences that exist among the classes, castes and races of India."

In fact anyone who has studied Gandhiji's articles in the *Harijan* will see that Gandhiji founds his new scheme on this fundamental proposition. Sjt. Sinha has also drawn attention to two important factors of our present social and economic life which should be borne in mind by anyone presenting a scheme of mass education :

"(1) The agrarian population of India, which forms the majority, have ample time at their disposal after finishing their farm-work. If they could utilise the leisure in various handiworks and constructive activities at home, it would make their lives more wholesome and the morals of society better, to speak nothing of the immense economic gain that would follow ; (2) in an industrial area, a training in handicraft should prove to be a healthy and useful occupation for the families of labourers ; and they may be saved from a good deal of moral evils and laziness. Handicrafts, while they bring joy and economic profit, also raise the moral standard by offering an occupation for one's leisure."

The writer says that the introduction of handiwork should be methodical, and it is interesting to observe that he thinks that "spinning and weaving can be universally introduced as one of the main crafts to be taught for the girls." Why should he have meant it only for the girls it is difficult to say, but it is something that he regards as of universal application. It should also be noted that he emphasises "handiwork teaching on educational lines", and also the point that "the work turned out should combine utmost practical utility with a fair degree of beauty of form."

INTRODUCTION

The Zakir Hussain Committee has attached to its report a detailed syllabus of the Spinning and Weaving course. The writer of this article promises to supply "detailed information regarding the work and organisation" of teaching various handicrafts, and his kind offer should be availed of by the Committee for handicrafts other than spinning.

L. S.

Vinaya-Bhavana,
November 4, 1952

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MANUAL TRAINING IN HUMAN CULTURE*

Manual training forms a most important factor of a man's general education. At least educationists of every country point to it as such.

But what is manual training? We in India seem to have a very poor idea of it, we confine it to acquiring skill in the use of one's hands. The scope of manual training is not so narrow and limited. No doubt, a chemist acquires a certain amount of manual skill by handling apparatus in his laboratory but this can not be set as a limit to the scope of manual training. To put it in a few words, we may say that the process by which the diverse thoughts of a man are applied, by means of tools and for his own existence, to the various natural objects such as clay, wood, iron, brass and copper is manual training. It is also to be noted that training in some particular profession is not manual training.

The earliest history of mankind bears witness

* This appears in the September 1926 issue of *Welfare* edited by Ashoke Chatterjee.

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

to the fact that man is a tool-using animal. The tendency to use tools is inherent in him. I should not be far from the truth, if I say that on the very different stages of the improvement of the tool rests the history of human civilization. The many articles that have been dug out of the bosom of earth have made us familiar with the life of man in ancient times. Just as the earth has gradually come out of the unfathomable waters, so also man has made the history of progressive civilization only by means of tools. Even though there were no tools at the beginning of creation, a man without tools is something beyond our imagination.

Man in his earliest stage was naked and in no need of earning his living. He lived in dens and caves and fed on wild fruits. He had to keep himself concealed from the view of the stronger animals, but in his own turn he did not leave any opportunity to oppress those who were weaker than himself. There are differences of opinion as to whether civilization began with the discovery of fire or the discovery of fire was the results of some preceding civilization, but every one is silent as to when man made the first use of it.

We may, however, say that either by chance or by his own exertion he came upon fire and found

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MANUAL TRAINING

it indispensable for his use. With the help of fire he made his life more happy and comfortable. It was considered to be the principal weapon for scaring away wild and fierce animals. It also served the purpose of keeping away winter cold.

Man was inferior to many other animals in bodily strength, so when fire was found to be insufficient for his own protection, he had to find out other ways and means for the purpose. By way of drawing a picture of the comparative weakness of man at that period Katharine Elizabeth Dopp writes: "He could not run as fast as the horse, swim as well as the fish, fly as the eagle, crawl as the serpent. ... He was not protected with armour as the turtle is, with a thick skin as the rhinoceros, with a heavy coat as the mammoth or with feathers and fur as the birds and beasts of prey".

It is needless to say that man does not possess these qualities even to this day but the meaning of the passage is that man had not the capacity of withstanding the furies of nature such as other animals had. Moreover, there were many animals who were superior to him — some in cunning, some in physical strength. So, in order to make up for these weakness and shortcomings man felt the supreme need of tools. Though tools of the

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

earliest stage were of a crude type, man employed his whole energy in making use and improvement of them. The earliest tool, a product of human brain is perhaps the hammer which was first used in cracking hard things such is cocoanut etc. In those days boxing was the only method of warfare but as soon as the hammar was invented man found that with its help he could rout his enemy who was either a man or a beast and much stronger than himself. But as time went on, man found it unsafe to fight face to face with an enemy even with the help of a hammer ; so he applied his brain to thinking out some other agent of warfare, which could give him the advantage of fighting from a distance. This is how he came to invent the arrow and the bow.

In course of time the arrow and the bow were much improved. It is needless to say that the improvement of these weapons led to the progress of man both in body and mind. He had to think out how he could make the best use of them. Then again the selection of wood and string, their length and thickness, — these were the problems that required his careful thinking. On the whole it may be said that, bow and arrow occupy the first place among the earliest inventions of man, for out of the invention of these

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MANUAL TRAINING

crude weapons has grown the present science of machine which has offered a vast field for the free play of human intellect and imagination. And this is what had made man strong enough to bring other animals into his subjection, — nay even to override to a certain extent the powers of nature herself. So it may be justly remarked as I have already done, that with the invention of different varieties of tools and machines, human civilisation developed stage by stage. Economists have concluded that the whole course of human activities falls into three different periods. First of all, there is the period of Domestic Economy when man lived exclusively in his family with no relation with the world outside. This period existed for different length of time in different countries. Then came the period of Handicraft which was ushered into existence during that later period of the Middle Ages in Europe and from the early times in India. In this period the development of handmade manufactures were greatly advanced. This period lasted in our country till the beginning of the present age which is known as the age of Machinery or the period of National Economy. During these three periods, the activities of man have passed through different stages, and in the

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

words of the historian they may be stated in the following order : 1. The hunting stage 2. The fishing stage. 3. The pastoral stage. 4. The agricultural stage. 5. The Age of metal. 6. The Stage of Trade. 7. Travel. 8. Transportation. 9. The City Stage : 10. Feudal system. 11. Handicraft system : 12. Factory System.

We find in the pages of history that man has always attempted to translate into action what he has come to as a result of his thinking. Again the result of his own action has called forth further imagination and thinking. In order to give shape to the objects of his imagination man has employed his hands and thereby increased their dexterity. Man will draw from his past experience and make himself more perfect with the joint use of his head and hands — this is the opinion of the far-sighted thinkers of the present age. And this is why we notice, in the present system of infantile education, an attempt to make the infant understand the mutual relation of hands and head and that of his own life with both.

The man of the present age has distinguished himself from his ancestors of the early age by the inventions of seven tools. They are the hammer, the axe, the saw, the plane, the square,

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MANUAL TRAINING

the chisel and the file. How far these instruments have influenced the progress of civilisation can be realised from the extract quoted from the writings of a Western Thinker. Carlyle says :—
“Man is a tool-using animal. He can use tools, devise tools ; with these the granite mountains melt into light dust before him ; he kneads iron as if it were soft paste ; seas are his smooth highways : winds and fire his unwearing steed. Nowhere we find him without tools ; without tools he is nothing, with tools he is all.”

In days gone by there was no institution for the instruction of children who received all they had to learn in their own home. In some of the families of those villages where the atmosphere of the present age has not yet entered we still notice that the education is imparted to the young minds through the various duties of household. It must be admitted that the domestic life now-a-days is not so well-organised as it was in olden times ; and consequently we find that the importance and responsibility of teachers are today much greater than formerly. However, the tendency to learn through work is in all ages and times predominant in human nature and more so in children. To point to this fact Prof. O' Shea says :— “In the earliest years the pupils' chief

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

interest is in constructive activity. If he be given the freedom to do as he chooses and suitable equipment, by far the largest part of his time will be spent in construction, in imitation of the activities going on about him. If he has blocks, he will be building, if paper and scissors, he will be cutting, if sand, he will be moulding ; if tools, he will be framing a box or a house or what not ; all of course in a crude imperfect way". Educationists of different countries have said the same thing in different languages. In the paper which C. E. F. Parker read before Eastern Manual Training Association in 1901, he says :—"Making or Manual Training has done more for the human race than the exercise of any, if not all, of other modes of expression. It is absolutely indispensable to normal physical development ; it has made a mighty influence upon brain building ; it has cultivated ethics as a basis of normal growth". In the year 1907, Prof. Benethe wrote :—"Two of the direct results of art instruction and manual training are, first, power to do and record, and second, ability to appreciate what is done by others."

With one more remark I shall bring the paper to a close. Whenever this mutual relationship of hands to head has been denied and all the

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF MANUAL TRAINING

importance given to one, there the society has broken its unity and created discontent and want of faith in one another. At the root of the conflict that is going on at the present moment throughout the world lies the same truth. Perhaps the seed of the conflict was sown that very day when came out a class of people who said that they should think for the whole community and the rest should do what they bade. At first the latter who are now-a-days termed as labourers, gladly undertook the burden assigned to them, but when their consciousness awakened they found that the very men whom they provided with their living looked down upon them with contempt. This pitiful state of society made John Ruskin make the following remark:—"We are always in these days endeavouring to separate intellect and manual labour ; we want one man to be always thinking, another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman and the other an operative, whereas the workman ought often to be thinking and thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen in the best sense. As it is we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising his brother and the mass of the society is made up of morbid thinkers and miserable workers."

SLOYD IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION*

Towards the middle of the last century there arose an educational movement in Sweden, which is of peculiar interest for all those educationists and teachers who, with the introduction of mass education and the opening up of the possibilities for further reforms, have been thinking of and working for a systematic development of our present day curricula. This movement was of a political and economic character in its origin, but finally transformed itself into a purely pedagogic movement. An account of this movement, known as sloyd, may prove to be of value to educationists in this country as showing the inter-relation of political and economic questions on the one hand and educational ones on the other, and also as demonstrating how an educational movement can help towards the making of a nation. It is my object to describe the system very briefly, and with this object, I shall begin by quoting a passage in which the birth of sloyd is described by its historian.

* This appears in the June 1982 issue of *Modern Review* edited by Ramananda Chatterji.

SLOYD IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION

"In the countries of the North, the light nights of the short summers, are soon succeeded by long, dark winter evenings. The agricultural population being about 60 per cent could not work in the fields and meadows, but in accordance with their ancestral traditions were obliged to get into work at such times for livelihood, within the four walls of their houses. And, therefore, all the family-members, including the servants, used to gather together round the stone hearth ; and while they were listening to northern legends from an elderly person or singing a ballad or a hymn together, their fingers remained busy. The men-folk made axe-helves, spoons, ladles, benches, tables and other necessary articles either for farm-work or for home — very often ornamenting each object with tasteful but simple designs, while the women-folk plied a spinning wheel or a loom or sew a vest for their own use or for the men-folk. Such works, executed with simple aids by persons not belonging to any guild whatsoever, had in Sweden for long ages, gone by the name of sloyd. But, the sudden development of industrial machinery and the consequent natural progress of the co-operative movements in Sweden, the practised ability in sloyd began to diminish gradually and, in some places, even dis-

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

appeared altogether. Various sorts of such Sloyd-work which in former times had been performed at home, were now taken up by the manufacturers of rising industries. The improved system of communications — such as railways, canals, etc., rendered it considerably easier for the country people to procure those articles that they used to make previously with their own hands. But such progress always carries with it certain disadvantages and dangers which cannot be avoided. It is certainly true that when the handicraft is transformed into machinery work a great amount of time saving can be reckoned upon ; and the time saved becomes time gained when it is profitably utilized. If, on the contrary, this be not the case and if the hour which was formerly devoted to productive activities is now being spent in idleness or what is surely worse — in wrong-doing, the hour saved becomes an hour lost ; and that is so, not only from a moral but also from a national-economical point-of-view”.

The late Otto Salomon,† the writer of these lines and the historian of Sloyd, was the man who subjected Sloyd-work to the pedagogic adaptation by which it could be included in the

† Herr Otto Salomon died in 1908.

SLOYD IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION

school curriculum as one of the chief educational media. This has invested Salomon with an importance as a pioneer that makes him rank high in the history of education. It was through the earnest efforts of this great pedagogue and, also, the assistance of his generous and philanthropically-minded uncle, August Abrahamson, who placed all his wealth and estate at the service of his enthusiastic nephew, that the Sloyd system was introduced and became a part and parcel of national education in Sweden.

It is indeed remarkable how inspite of the influence of industries and machinery, the people of Sweden came to that intuitive understanding and took measures to re-instate the Sloyd of their fore-fathers in such an honourable position as it holds today. In this connection, I am tempted to state, on the basis of my own experience, that Sloyd is one of the reasons why the charming Swedes are not a victim to machines even today when the country itself has been highly industrialized and, also, it is for the same reason that the spirit of invention and creation counts for so much in the Swedish character. Moreover, the Sloyd-character has complemented their industrial life in a strange but a very harmonious way.

The history of educational movements tells us

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

that for centuries past almost every leading educationist of repute, such as Comenius, Franke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, etc. (not to mention numerous others) gave expression, although each from his own view point, to the opinion that the training of the hand should proceed harmoniously and simultaneously with that of the head and the heart, and Sweden ranked first in translating those theories into practice with the most satisfactory results.* Foreign scholars avail themselves in considerable numbers of the facilities provided at August Abrahamson's foundation at Nääs, Sweden. Since its start,** with the late Otto Salomon at its head, teachers in hundreds from all parts of the globe flocked there. And gradually, Nääs, the home of Sloyd, has become the international centre of cultural association. Here even now, scholars and teachers from different countries gather together in quest of learning. A spirit of fellowship vibrates in the air of Nääs.

In this connection, it will not be out of place

* Salomon writes, "The educative force which lies in rightly directed bodily labour, is a means of developing in the pupils physical and mental powers which will be a sure and evident gain to them for life "

** The Sloyd Teachers' Training Seminarium at Nääs began operations in 1872.

SLOYD IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION

to mention that, during the period of fifty years, about three thousand foreign scholars attended the Sloyd Course at Nääs, and among them teachers from England and Scotland numbered more than nine hundred, inspite of the fact that the periodical courses similar to that of Sloyd began in both these countries after the year 1906. At present Dr. Rurik Holm, a striking personality and a great thinker is the Director of Nääs Seminarium, which is now a State institution with all its original independent character.

Now, turning our attention to India and making a survey of our present day educational system; we see that every year students in thousands are coming out of the universities with their diplomas and degrees but that their book-knowledge does not help them, in most cases, even to earn their livelihood. Many of them go about in vain quest of jobs. It is clear that no Government can provide all of them with employment. We hear our leading people telling young men to take to some independent means of livelihood, and also to strive at the same time, for the creation of new fields of activity. We also often hear of suggestions to revive home-industries, and it seems the country has also responded to some extent. It is, indeed,

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

essential in a country like ours to open up such new paths, not only for mere means of livelihood but also in the interest of national economy. Yet, how many people do think it is essential to prepare the young from the very beginning through education, which alone can give them the initiative and the self-confidence, necessary to undertake new courses of action and face all sorts of difficulties and responsibilities — known and unknown ? Where is the way out and what is the right way ?

It is not the object of this article to go into the details of the subject. My aim is to draw the attention of both school authorities and the public to this vital question. It is vital, because our present-day system of education fails to provide such training. Let me, however, in view of a reform and of a part-solution of our educational problem, which appears to have been hitherto the cause of unemployment among the youth to some extent, touch on some concrete aspects of Sloyd, namely, how it is to be started in and amalgamated with our everyday life.

The Educational aspect of Sloyd :

It is the training of the hand and eye along with that of the brain that brings “the co-development of faculties producing a harmonious unity.

It is to lead the children through education into the fullest, noblest and most faithful relations of which they are capable with the world in which they live".

"The power of doing increases the power of creating, and thus energy is developed—an educational factor which ought to be turned to much account. The self-reliance which springs from it must ever be regarded as one of the highest educational gains." It follows that the training of the hand raises the dignity of labour ; for it fosters interest in manual labour.

The socio-economic aspect :

It is clear that this great interest in manual labour, thus created by the introduction of Sloyd, will naturally stimulate the life of the home-industries. Moreover, a trained hand cultivates the brain, and thus produces an inventive mind for production and aesthetic taste in the product. For, is it not a fact that, generally, a large number of the articles that we often use, is manufactured directly or indirectly, with the help of the hands ? The more the hands are trained the better are the products. It, therefore, follows that the demand for the better products and their due appreciation will be always greater on the

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

part of better trained public, and there lies the key to the progress of industries.

Naturally then, the Sloyd-training just in the early years of life will result in productive activities among children when they come out of their schools and seek a career.

Sloyd in Schools : Let me now give some hints on the introduction of Sloyd as a general subject of education in schools :

1. The instruction should be methodical, and given in a systematic way.

2. A well chosen pedagogical series of models should be furnished as a guide for instruction. The series of models must be useful objects which one can use in daily life and which are good when viewed from an aesthetic point of view.

3. For beginners, paper and cardboard work is the most suitable. Benchwood work and then light bell-metallic work will follow to the end of the school-career.

4. Children always naturally find great pleasure in constructive activities. Therefore, as a fundamental principle, the subject of instruction will be optional and not compulsory. To impart such training by artisans is out of the question. But it should, at all costs, be done by pedagogy-trained persons, without which its educative value will

never be secured and the goal in view will not be attained. Therefore, it is highly necessary to train the teachers first

5. For the children who are decidedly not going in for higher studies after the school-career, arrangements should be made for continuation courses whereby every such student will be taught at least one of the various kinds of hand-work thoroughly.

When it is question of spreading new knowledge, a new kind of work, or of reviving that which is on the verge of extinction, there are two different ways to adopt. One can try to influence either the adults or the children. It is, therefore, necessary on the one hand to arrange short courses for adults, chiefly for manual training or to form associations in different parts of the country where manual training should be a part of other cultural activities ; on the other hand, to establish some model schools where children will receive an orderly and all-round education. The surest way on the whole seems to be the last one, as it is well-known that the mind of a child is more receptive than that of an adult. Therefore, the foundation must be laid in each branch of knowledge as early as circumstances and means permit, at least by way of experiments. The

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

future always belongs to the rising generation, and that is why all social and economic questions can be finally solved as only a question of education.

SOME PRACTICAL AND IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MASS EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.*

The future mass education policy ought to be, in my opinion, constructive, and it should be real and suitable to the peculiar needs of our soil and should be directed towards the bridging up of the gulf that exists today between the intellectual and manual labour, and of many other differences that exist among the classes, castes and races in India. Only such an educational policy can help in securing recognition for all works alike intellectual and manual and thus foster that self-respect which is essential for the moral growth of the individual. Eradication of many of our socio-political evils will also depend on the course of our future mass education policy. The system of public instruction now prevailing in our country has entirely ignored the fact that man is a tool-using being. The tendency of using tools is inherent in man, and on the different stages of the improvement of the tools

* This appears in the December 1937 issue of *Modern Review*.

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

rests the whole history of civilization. I contend that hand-work must receive its proper importance in the curriculum of primary mass education of India in future. In our country, each particular branch of manual work was carried on by a particular caste, e. g., only those who were carpenters by caste worked and could work on wood and so on. This system suited the needs of the country in the past; all crafts being hereditary, there was no need of public schools for vocational training. Times have now changed, whatever good the former system might have contained, the future mass education policy ought to fight out the spirit that prevails today, making a gentleman of one person and a cultivator or labourer of another. That will save the society from the curse of the unreal thinkers and miserable workers. The socio-economic problems and also the socio-political, I submit, can be finally solved only through a proper system of education. That has been the experience in other countries, which once faced problems similar to those in our country. I shall not here go into the details of such history. I now propose to draw up a concrete scheme based on my studies and fifteen years' experience in and outside India.

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In the past, children used to learn in their own homes their future vocation, following in the line of their parents and working with them. Home then fulfilled the purpose of the school. The domestic life, however, has changed today, and the responsibility of the school and the importance of the education that it imparts, are greater than ever before. The school of today, therefore, must be fully equipped to teach children in terms of a future vocation and to foster the growth of that impulse, so natural in children to "make things." Bearing all these factors in my mind, I humbly submit the outlines of a scheme of public education in its practical aspects, leaving aside the other aspects for the experts in this line. I firmly believe that tangible results will follow if this scheme is experimented upon and translated into action. Before presenting the scheme I should like, however, to draw attention to two important factors of our present social and economic life.

1. The agrarian population of India, which forms the majority, have ample time at their disposal after finishing their farm work. If they could utilize this leisure in various hand works and constructive activities at home, it would make their life more wholesome and the morale of the

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

society better, to speak nothing of the immense economic gain that would follow.

2. In the industrial area, a training in handicraft should prove to be a healthy and useful occupation for the families of the labourers ; and they may thus be saved from a good deal of moral evils and laziness. Handicrafts, while they bring joy and economic profit, also raise the moral standard by offering an occupation for one's leisure.

The above two factors should be borne in mind while framing a policy of public education.

Some Aspects of Educational Hand Work

Some of the arguments why the mass education policy should lay much emphasis on the practical aspects are as follows :

“The power of doing increases the love of creating and thus energy is developed—an educational factor which ought to be turned into much account. Self-reliance which springs from it must ever be regarded as one of the highest educational gains”.

The training of the hands raises the dignity of labour and fosters interests in manual labour.

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Socio-Economic Aspect

It is clear that this great interest in manual labour, created by the introduction of hand-work will naturally stimulate the life of home industries. Moreover, the training of hands at the same time stimulates the growth of the mind and gives it an inventive bent ; it also gives one an aesthetic quality which is reflected in the products. The demand for better products, and their due appreciation will also be greater on the part of better-trained public and therein lies the key to the progress of industries.

This kind of training just in the early years of life will result in productive activities among the pupils when they come out of their schools and seek a career.

Hand-work in Schools—How should it be Introduced

1. The introduction should be methodical and lessons given by trained teachers in a systematic way.

2. The well-chosen pedagogical series of models or exercises should be furnished as a guide for introduction. The series of models must be

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

useful objects which one can use in daily life and which are good when viewed from an aesthetical point of view.

3. For beginners, paper and card board work is the most suitable. Bench-wood work and then light metal work will follow to the end of the school career. Spinning and handloom weaving can be, I think, universally introduced as one of the main crafts to be taught to the girls.

4. Children always naturally find great pleasure in constructive activities. Therefore, the subjects of instructions need not be made compulsory. To have such training imparted by artisans, (there is hardly any), is out of the question, for the ordinary artisan can not be expected to convey to the students the fullest educative value and implications of this training in handicrafts. The teaching, therefore, should be entrusted to trained persons who will be able to inform his students about the real purpose of handicraft and its real place in the scheme of education. It is highly necessary, therefore, to have, first of all, trained teachers.

Primary education policy should meet the real requirements of our country. The syllabus should be based on realism. For mere book-learning and spoon-fed idealism, which bear no

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

relation to the practical needs of life, do greater harm than good.

Taking five or six as school-going age, the compulsory schooling must be for six or seven years-- the last two years being the continuation for those not going in for further training in secondary schools. The continuation school should impart a substantial amount of vocational training and the secondary education too must have in its curriculum vocational training as a part of their general education. The continuation school, which can be termed as higher elementary school, is meant to complete full courses of schooling, and its object is to help in providing opportunities to school-leaving boys and girls to make or find out suitable occupation in life.

Adult School

The mass education policy also shall include in its programme the requirements of training the boys and the girls of poor parents.

There must be a sort of school to be called as adult continuation school, a super-structure of the seven years' elementary school providing opportunities to those showing considerable desire for further knowledge without interfering with their

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

vocations, by holding short courses of gradations. Such schools may or may not require examinations ; and schools, according to the nature of the locality and its demands, e. g., in industrial centres or in the country side with agrarian requirements, must have the liberty to choose the subject of instructions and the teachers to conduct classes independently. There must be a definite syllabus providing lectures on topics of the day. Such schools should have well-arranged vocational training classes to enable the participants of either sex to improve their knowledge and dexterity on particular crafts as they choose.

Meritorious children of well-to-do parents willing to continue study in the secondary school may leave the elementary school after completing the five years' courses, and the secondary educational syllabus should contain the amount of vocational training given in the continuation school.

Hand-work teaching on educative lines is mainly for boys and girls ranging from eight to twelve years of age or above. The most suitable form of manual labour for lads at that time of life to begin with is card-board work and then wood and metal work in succession, for girls cookery, gardening, spinning, weaving, embroidery

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

and other house-crafts. Educational hand-work claims to have a place in the school curriculum as being an essential factor in an all round general education of youth. The object is not to turn out all at once so many carpenters or craftsmen, but it seeks to contribute materially to the pupils' moral, intellectual and physical developments and to encourage him to cultivate orderliness, perseverance in his work, by training his eyes to see more accurately and his hands to execute more skillfully and aesthetically and also to counteract the ill effects of an undue and strenuous concentration on intellectual work which school life in India particularly fosters. The pupil is not expected to make a large number of big articles but to be able to give evidence of the possible and attainable accuracy in the execution of the articles. Pupils are to be led from simple tasks to more difficult and complicated pieces of work by slow degrees and evenly progressive succession.

While presenting the plan I am not speaking anything theoretically but from my own practical experience. This system has been in existence and worked with great success in some of the Scandinavian countries where I had my training. The attainments of these lands have been taken

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

as a matter of mother-models* for many other civilized countries striving to make public education more real and responsive to the requirements of life.** There are indeed other systems that spring from the Swedish source of sloyd system ; but they are still in an experimental stage necessarily causing wastage and expense which

* T. W. Berry, Director of Education, Rhondda, S. Wales writes — "We have the German, American and British systems of woodwork, each differing in details, but alike built upon the principles as set forth at Nääs.

** Writes Professor James, "The most colossal improvement which recent years have seen in secondary education lies in the introduction of the manual training in schools, not because they will give us a people more handy and practicable for domestic life and better skill in trade, but because they will give us citizens with an entirely different intellectual fibre. Laboratory work and shopwork engender a habit of observation—a knowledge of difference between accuracy and vagueness, and an insight into nature's complexity and into the inadequacy of all abstract verbal accounts of real phenomena, which, once wrought into the minds, remain there as lifelong possessions. They confer *precision* ; because if you are doing a thing you must do it definitely right or definitely wrong. They give *honesty* ; for, when you express yourself by making things, and not by using words, it becomes impossible to dissimulate your vagueness or ignorance by ambiguity. They beget a habit of *self-reliance* ; they keep the interest and attention always cheerfully engaged, and reduce the teacher's disciplinary functions to a minimum." (Talk to teachers)

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

can be borne only by institutions with resources. In Indian conditions, at the first stage of introducing such a system in public institutions, it should, I contend, be seen that all things that are made must be of a high standard, saleable in the market, and materials used must be indigenous and local as far as possible.

The basis of the said system is a series of exercises. And by this term is to be understood the modifications of the materials by means of one or more tools or instruments in a prescribed way and for a particular end or subject. The number of the exercises, theoretically, may be very large indeed. But in working out a method to be adopted for practical teaching purposes, a definite limitation is essential and obligatory. Thus, the method should embrace, say, 20 models of useful objects in card-board work, 40 in wood-work and 20 in metal work.

In this connection it is to be taken into consideration that the simplest way of doing good and useful things is the highest attainment in home-craft's technique. The work turned out should combine utmost practical utility with a fair degree of beauty of form. The articles made by the pupils should as a general rule be things which can be put into actual use at home and

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

thereby serving to strengthen the relation between school and home. Models bearing purely ornamental character should be left for the adult vocational school intending to turn out good artisans.

Educational hand-work or so-named sloyd seeks to call forth individual activity on the part of the pupils to train their power of observation and reflection, causing practice to follow theory through execution ; instead of explaining why and wherefore the teacher is to lead the child on to think for himself while accomplishing his own work independently. A great secret and a factor contributory to this end is that the teacher shall guide and superintend the children at their task but he should always be on his guard against carrying out any part of the work himself. The work should go hand-in-hand when occasion arises, in such wise that the pupils after acquiring the elements of drawing should be set to work from their own design instead of from models. The chief object of instruction being individual development of the pupil and the system employed is that of individual and not of class training.

In order to illustrate what can be achievement in the line as mentioned a few pictures of the

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

models executed in my class are also given here.*

The same principle should also guide the works of house-crafts intended specially for the girls and I contend that good teachers and instructors must be invited to help in preparing a norm for teachers' training. Again if the home industries are to be revived in right direction, I think, it should move along with the training centres as I have indicated.

Workshop System.

I could not find a better term than this. The utility of such workshops on one hand is to provide a kind of home and refuge out of the school hours for the children of the poor parents who are unable to look after their children themselves owing to their work that keeps them away from their homes, and on the other hand, for the adult boys and girls having no occupation after the

* The original article was accompanied by some fifteen photographs which, however, could not be reproduced here. I held several courses after writing this article in a truer life-situation than ever before during last fifteen years and conducted a number of experiments specially in connection with the integration of crafts, the results of which, demand separate treatment and, therefore, cannot be incorporated here — L. S.

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

school period. District Boards or Local Governments should manage such school-home as a safeguard against temptations and dangers belonging to the age and keep them occupied with suitable work which develops their dexterity in certain handicrafts. Our universities also can do much for the youth of 14 to 20 years of age seeking employments. The work should be superintended by good trained teachers of both sexes by establishing training camps of the same nature.

The actual working programme of house-craft, embroidery, knitting, sewing, spinning and weaving is to be submitted by the experts in the line.

The work-shop system, as mentioned, should include local crafts such as cane-work, basket making, artistic book-binding, lac-work, wood-work, metal-work etc. and for the girls weaving, knitting, embroidery, cooking and so on, and it should run a business which would be the centre of the local home industries. Such a business concern may easily give work to the boys and girls after they have received the training and thus open a way of earning for the youths. Local Government or the Commune should guide the policy in order to meet and satisfy local demands, and government and the public are expected to

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

encourage such a concern. In fact, these would form the nucleus of the rising local industry and it can do much towards the uplift of the local crafts and their revival.

The essential aim at the present scheme of mass education is to get the children to love their work and do it well and to equip them with the amount of dexterity and discipline in life as will enable them to make their way successfully through life, and as far as possible to support themselves after leaving schools. Detailed information regarding the work and organisation can be supplied, if my present scheme finds supporters among leading personages. In our country no such system has been evolved up till now, and my hope is to find out a standard, and I believe the seeds of such a movement lie in the direction I have indicated.

IMPORTANCE OF "CARDBOARD, WOOD AND METAL WORK"* IN EDUCATION

By Sjt. Lakshmiswar Sinha, Craft Superintendent, Vidya Mandir Training Institute, Wardha, C. P.

I have been asked to speak on the basic craft of cardboard, wood and metal work. As laid down in the Report of the Zakir Husain Committee, a basic craft must fulfil two conditions — educational and economic. It must be rich in educational possibilities, finding natural points of correlation with important human activities and interests, and it should extend into the whole content of the school curriculum. It must also be a productive craft in the real sense of the word ; it must have its own place in the scheme of national economy.

The craft of cardboard-modelling has been fully dealt with in the handbook for teachers just published. That book indicates how cardboard-modelling can be used profitably as a medium of

*"ONE STEP FORWARD" —The report of the first Conference of Basic National Education, Poona, October 1989. — Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Sevagram, Wardha, C. P. (Page 100)

CARDBOARD, WOOD AND METAL WORK

education for recognized school subjects, and for the training of young children in habits of co-operative disciplined activity — a training which forms an indispensable part of the new scheme of education.

I wish now to discuss the crafts of wood and metal work, dealing only with their educational aspect. Productive and scientific wood-work will impart in the pupils on the one hand an impetus to organize their lives in a natural way, and on the other hand a knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, physics etc.

The introduction of wood-work will train the pupils' senses and will prepare them to deal with the harder material, metal. From ancient times, wood has constituted an important material from which primitive people fashioned their implements before the discovery of metal. Even today it is being increasingly used, for it covers a wide field of individual and social needs.

The introduction of wood-work will equip the pupils with an elementary knowledge of local trees and their uses. As they learn the nature of wood while handling it, they will come to understand the effect of natural forces on the growing tree. They will also learn to attach a proper value to isolated plants and to forests, which are

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

frequently neglected and destroyed owing to ignorance. They will come to recognize the different specimens of Indian wood and so to know something of the geography of wood in India. Hence they will proceed to a knowledge of the people of different provinces — people in the various branches of wood-work, their modes of living and social customs. Next will come the physical geography of the country, the effect of rivers and climate on forest growths. The story of the invention of simple tools for wood-work will stimulate curiosity as to the lives of the people who invented them.

Thus, if wood-work is taught scientifically through making objects of utility, it fulfils the conditions for a basic craft laid down in the Zakir Husain report. To proceed to metal work which will be introduced in grades VI and VII. This craft has its own traditions in the annals of human culture. The story of the manufacture of tools and other objects made of metal, from early times until the present day, covers a wide field of the knowledge of human civilization, for it requires a great deal of ingenuity to make a tool or implement which shall be both simple and useful.

Let us examine the general educational value of the craft.

CARDBOARD, WOOD AND METAL WORK

It will give the pupils an elementary knowledge of working with materials which are harder than wood. It will equip the pupils with an elementary knowledge of the metal resources of the country and the role which they play in the national economy. Metal-work demands a certain knowledge of general science and elementary physics which the pupils will acquire while making concrete objects of utility — an important educational factor. Through this craft, the pupils' knowledge of mathematics will become concrete and so useful, and the pupils will be better equipped for higher studies in technical lines.

Moreover, work with metal demands a precision and accuracy which must have their influence on the building of character and the development of habits of methodical thinking. It will supply our crudest needs in the form of implements and appliances for the farm, the workshop and the household, and simple implements required in the prosecution of other crafts. Since this is an agricultural country, the introduction of metal-work will effect great economy and efficiency in all our crafts. The aesthetic value of hand-made instruments in preference to machine-made products must not be overlooked. To sum up,

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

great potential factors, both educative and economic, are implicit in the introduction of these two basic crafts, and their introduction will moreover facilitate the development of other crafts which are at present handicapped on account of inefficiency of tools and implements.

Next we must consider the technique of correlation which must always follow the actual process of living. Firstly we must bear in mind that a few generations ago, crafts were centred in the village and many a simple village craft connected with the day-to-day life of the people was performed within the home. From an early age children helped in the work of these home crafts and thus had opportunities for the observation of the work in all its stages—the process, materials and implements. Even today, village children are expected to help in the few surviving village crafts. But the village life of the past is dead, and the crafts have degenerated with it. I therefore maintain that if we wish our villages to become once more living and pulsating, we have to begin our education with the actual necessities of life. No abstract object lessons can acquaint us with the actual business of life and of living. The importance of correlation of such subjects as the mother-tongue, general

CARDBOARD, WOOD AND METAL WORK

science, social studies etc., with constructive crafts can be grasped fully only if we grasp the implications of craft work in its natural, organized and scientific aspects.

Correlation itself depends very much on a comprehensive view of local demands and necessities and on the nature of the objects to be executed. The common principles for the evolution of a model series are dealt with in Chapter IV of the handbook on cardboard modelling.*

"It must be borne in mind that all correlative phenomena are interconnected. When the child has gained one piece of knowledge through actual experience or correlation, he is better able to discover other similar phenomena; it is an accumulative process. The child cannot conceive an abstract idea without concrete support. The correlative links in the work are many and can never be complete; the teacher must use his discretion and consider their relative importance, bearing in mind the age, health and environment of the children."

We must always remember that the society has founded the school to rear and educate its

* "Cardboard Modelling" — page 27, para 8. (1st edition).

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

children. Therefore school activities and school life must form the main basis for the social studies which the children are expected to assimilate from actual experience and should therefore coincide and reflect the ideal social conditions which alone can give the children a true sense of citizenship and encourage the enjoyment of co-operative activities.*

CONCLUSION

It is true that since long I have been feeling the necessity of making a direct approach to rural life and its problems and to study them on the spot as well as to serve the cause of education within the framework of the village itself. That idea never gave me peace. The difficulties on the way of materializing the plan were enormous. Very little support and encouragement was forthcoming from friends and relations. Anyway I could not resist the call for long. In 1940 I left my service at Wardha and thereafter spent months moving from place to place in different parts of Bengal. I wished to settle in a village region with mixed population representing different professions, castes and creeds. The impelling idea was to work for creating a new outlook which would overshadow all sorts of traditional barriers and help to create a self-sufficient and co-operative community.

In the year 1942, the call came from Gandhiji to join the newly started Nai-Talim Bhawan at Sevagram. Gandhiji's call was for me a command, and I had to obey. All through the gloomy

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

period of the national struggle (May 1942 to May 1943) as I worked away at my own job of teachers' training, the idea of total reconstruction of village from within haunted me.

In the following year, I collected all my strength and started my long-cherished work in a region — not far away from my native village, a place situated about sixteen miles away from the nearest railway station in the district of Sylhet.

It was a lonely uphill task in the beginning. Luckily, I succeeded in gathering a band of willing and trained workers round me very soon after. Over a period of four glorious years we toiled and moiled and a time came when we began to have the first glimmerings of a hope fulfilled. Then, tragedy overtook us in the form of communal dissension, referendum and partition. The socio-political upheaval that followed in their wake struck at our humble venture with all the strength of a historical force. Although to give up the work was an agony, we had no other alternative but to abandon the centre.

My Sinhararh (the name by which the centre came to be known) experiment could not be brought to its logical conclusion. But the adventure was well worth the effort even though

CONCLUSION

it did not bring us near the goal. In the course of our exploration, many a truth was revealed to us which would have otherwise remained obscure.

Broadly speaking, we divided our programme of work into two catagories — one following from and based on the other. Firstly, we made an attempt to build up our own life on the basis of self-help, and, secondly, through our own example we wanted to educate the villagers in the idea and practice of total reconstruction of village-life. There is a tendency to distinguish education from the actual work of reconstruction. This is an invidious distinction. Education, if it is to be dynamic, must be a training in adjustment, for the individual and for the society as a whole. A community, consisting of properly integrated individuals, well-adjusted to its environment — social, cultural and economic — that was the ideal we constantly kept before our mind. For us education was no mere schooling, it was the act of living itself. We made, therefore, the total life of the village our concern ; for us the village was our school. And our approach in educating the village was to teach by example rather than by precept. Housing, gardening, agriculture, fishery, cow-keeping, village industries, health and

EDUCATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

sanitation — as a matter of fact, nothing that was connected with the life of the village, was outside our sphere of attention. There was no spoon-feeding, however; the villagers were encouraged to rely on their own initiative and spirit of self-help in solving their problems. As we met them on equal terms as fellow-villagers our example served not only as a source of inspiration but also as a challenge. And they did respond readily and courageously.

My account, short as it is, would remain incomplete, if I did not say a word about the lifelong activities of my father Sri Banerwar Sinha (now eightyseven years old), who had been a constant source of inspiration to us in our endeavour. Services rendered by him towards total uplift of the rural area round about our native village, the intimacy of contact which he had established with the people over a period of more than half a century, and, above all, his scientific acumen and sagacity — provided us with a favourable ground to start with. We could always bring our difficulties to him and his wise counsel saved us from many a pitfall in the initial stages. Sinharah was in a way his spiritual heritage. — That I could not put it to the best use in the service of my fellow men, is

CONCLUSION

my misfortune. But the adventure was well worth my while as long as it lasted and nobody was happier than my old father to find me grappling with problems which had engaged the best years of his life. Some day perhaps his dream will be fulfilled elsewhere.

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Teachers' Handbook of Educational Craft.

CARDBOARD MODELLING Part I.

*Published by Hindusthani Talimi Sangh,
Sevagram, Wardha, C. P. Page 108, Price Rupee
One only.*

MAHATMA GANDHI writes in *Harijan* :

".....It has five chapters and two appendices.....The chapters deal among other things 'with materials,' 'class-room and equipment,' 'fundamental techniques,' a few suggestions about correlated teaching, and 'how to work with children.'.....

"The book is profusely illustrated. It should be in the hands not only of every teacher of 'Nayee Talim' but also of all teachers who would like their pupils to learn a single craft. For every advanced student it provides a useful and instructive hobby which he can teach himself."

SEVAGRAM, 18. 12. 39.

M. K. G.

PROF. ANATHNATH BASU writes in *The Modern Review* :

".....In fact, the book amply demonstrates how this basic craft can be exploited to give the fullest scope to the children for creative

self-expression and for helping them to develop a co-operative community life in the school.

The book is profusely illustrated with diagrams and pictures of models executed by the pupils under the direction of the author. The printing and get up are excellent.

The special feature of the book is that it is the outcome of practical experiences. It embodies the result of the author's experiments in training teachers for Basic National Education. The reviewer had the opportunity of watching the author at work and he can testify to the fact that there is nothing theoretical in the suggestions offered by the author and with the scheme developed by him in his book.

Mr. Lakshmiswar Sinha, the author is specially fitted for the task he set before himself when he wrote this book.....”

The book has been translated into Hindustani, and published by the same publisher.

কাঠের কাজ (Wood Work)

প্রকাশক : বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থালয়, ২, কলেজ স্কোয়ার, কলিকাতা

ভূমিকায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখিতেছেন :—“আমাদের মতে পঙ্খুতাই ভদ্র সমাজের লক্ষণ, হাতপাগুলোকে অপটু করিয়া তুলিলেই ভদ্রতা পাকা হয়। ইহার ক্ষতি ততদিন বুঝিতে পারি নাই যতদিন বাঙালী ভদ্রসন্তানের একমাত্র মোক্ষলাভ ছিল

কেরাণীভীর্থে । সেখানে জায়গার টানাটানি ঘটেই দেখা গেল তাহার মত অসহায় প্রাণী আর জীবলোকে নাই । সংসার-সমুদ্রে পুঁথিগত বিত্বাই যাহাদের একমাত্র ভেলা ছিল তাহাদের এবার নৌকাডুবির পালা । সেই সঙ্কটের তাড়নায় ভদ্রলোকের ছেলেকেও আজ হাতে ও কলমে দুই দিকেই শক্ত হইতে হইবে এই তাগিদ জ্বাসিয়াছে । এই শুভদিনের প্রারম্ভে শ্রীযুক্ত লক্ষ্মীশ্বর সিংহ ‘কাঠের কাজ’ বইখানি লিখিয়াছেন, ভদ্রলোকের ভয়ে ‘ছুতারের কাজ’ নাম দিতে পারেন নাই । তা হউক, বইখানি সকলেরই কাজে লাগিবে, কেবল মাত্র জীবিকার জ্ঞান নহে, শিক্ষার জ্ঞান । কারণ যাহার হাত দুটো কন্মিষ্ঠ নয়, হাতের দিকে সে মুঢ়, তা হোক না সে নামজাদা, বা পণ্ডিত-বংশের কুলতিলক । দেশের এই সব বোকা হাতের মানুষকে, শিক্ষিত হাতের মানুষ করিবার অভিপ্রায়ে এই যে বইখানি লেখা, ইহা বাঙালীর ঘরে এবং বিতালয়ে আজকাল আদর পাইবে বলিয়া আশা হইতেছে । ..”

AN INDIAN LOOKS AT SWEDEN

(Hindo rigardas Svedlandon) — Published by Eldona Societo Esperanto, Stockholm. Page 200. Paper cover 4/3, bound 5/9.

PROF. W. F. COLLINSON writes in “*The British Esperantist*” :

“The publishing of an original work in Esperanto written by a young Indian about a Scandinavian country is in itself a notable event. It is important both as showing the ease with

which Esperanto is handled in speech and writing by an Oriental as well as providing a sympathetic and informative study of a great people. Mr. Sinha has lived in Sweden for three years, travelling from end to end, studying especially at the "slöjd" academy and penetrating through Esperanto into the intimacy of home circles in town and country alike. He jotted down his experiences when they were still fresh in the form of letters which he has utilized in compiling the present work. After a chapter containing general information he guides us in turn through Stockholm round Mälaren, then through Gotland, Dalarna—whose choirs in their picturesque costume provided such enjoyable singing at the Stockholm congress—and all the other provinces from the wheatfields of Skane to the snowclad mountains of Lapland. The author stayed with fishermen in the south-west and came into close contact with Laplanders in the far north. He supplies us with a wealth of information regarding the characteristics of each province, its arts and industries and in particular tells us much about "slöjd", a word akin to our "sleight," i. e., dexterity, and was applied to handicrafts developed on traditional lines. The book is admirably illustrated with excellent photographs, including landscapes, buildings, men and women, and above all specimens of Swedish art.

"In the preface Professor Collinder, the eminent Ugro-Finnic scholar whom we are proud to number among us Esperantists, modestly disclaims that the Swedes are quite as irreproachable as they would appear from the book. Yet, those of us who have had the good fortune to visit Sweden and to meet Swedes take off our hats in respect to a country that has gone far to solve the besetting problem of the present age — the diffusion throughout a whole nation of well-being and culture rendered possible by a mechanisation which is utilised in a rational manner, but not allowed to obliterate the magnificent of the past.....He is to be congratulated on a fine piece of work, which it is to be hoped will encourage his fellow-countrymen in Bengal and the rest of India to go and do likewise."

DR. EDMOND PRIVAT writes in *The Modern Review*.

".....After three years spent in Sweden, Mr. Sinha now publishes in Esperanto a remarkable book about that country. He has been living in Swedish homes and loves the friendly and humorous nation, under whose roofs he was so heartily received and entertained.

"He has admired the landscape, from the fisherman's villages of the coast to dark forests of the center and the snowy plains of the north. He

has wondered at the beauty of Stockholm with its many bridges, its splendid city-hall and its workmen crowding the libraries and evening classes.

"All this he describes in a picturesque manner and the book will make its way.....

".....Nowhere democracy has brought its best fruits in such a successful way as in Sweden. Women take part in public life and give it a generous tone. Co-operative organization makes life cheaper and governments supported by workers and peasants develop education and a high standard of living. All sorts of state insurances exist to help citizens in old age or in sickness and give their children free medical treatment.

"All this has been reached without violence and by really democratic effort with full freedom of discussion and tolerance of other people's opinion.His impressions of that country and of its atmosphere give a true and charming picture of what I consider the highest civilization in Europe."

ল্যাপল্যাণ্ড (Lapland)

প্রকাশক, প্রবাসী কাৰ্যালয়, ১২০১২, আপার সাকুলার রোড,
কলিকাতা। মূল্য দেড় টাকা।

“...শ্রীযুক্ত লক্ষ্মীশ্বর সিংহ সুইডেন ও নরওয়ে দেশ দুটিতে
দীর্ঘকাল ছিলেন।...উত্তর-ইউরোপের ঐ দুটি দেশে থাকিবার
সময় তিনি ল্যাপল্যাণ্ড, আইসল্যাণ্ড, ডেন্মার্ক প্রভৃতি দেশও
দেখিয়াছিলেন। তাহার মধ্যে তাঁহার ল্যাপল্যাণ্ড সম্বন্ধীয় জ্ঞান ও
অভিজ্ঞতা এই পুস্তকটিতে নিবদ্ধ হইয়াছে।...”

“আমি জানি, সাধারণতঃ উপগ্রাস ও গল্লের বহির্ বাঙালী
পাঠিকা ও পাঠকেরা পড়িয়া থাকেন। কিন্তু লক্ষ্মীশ্বরবাবুর এই
সুখপাঠ্য ল্যাপল্যাণ্ডের বৃত্তান্ত পড়িলে তাঁহাদের সময়ের সদ্ব্যয়ই
হইবে। তাঁহাদের জ্ঞানবৃদ্ধি হইবে।...”

“লক্ষ্মীশ্বরবাবু ল্যাপল্যাণ্ডের সহিত ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে মিলিয়া মিশিয়া,
তাহাদেরই একজন হইয়া, যাহা জানিতে পারিয়াছেন তাহাই এই
পুস্তকে লিপিবদ্ধ করিয়াছেন। ল্যাপল্যাণ্ড সম্বন্ধে সর্বতত্ত্ববিশারদ
অধ্যাপক কলিঙারের মন্তব্য পড়িয়া আমার এই ধারণা হইয়াছে
যে, ল্যাপল্যাণ্ডের সম্বন্ধে লক্ষ্মীশ্বরবাবুর জ্ঞান সম্পূর্ণ নির্ভরযোগ্য।
তাঁহার পর্যবেক্ষণশক্তি প্রশংসনীয় এবং বিদেশীদের বিশ্বাস অর্জন
করিবার এবং তাহাদের সহিত ঘনিষ্ঠতা স্থাপন করিবার প্রভূত
ক্ষমতাও তাঁহার আছে।

“আমি যতদূর জানি, ল্যাপল্যাণ্ড সম্বন্ধে বাংলা ভাষায় এইটিই
প্রথম পুস্তক। ইতি”

ঘাটশিলা, ৪ঠা আষাঢ়, ১৩৪৮

শ্রীরামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায়

